TWEED VALLEY SESSION 5 – RAIDERS AND REIVERS

The Feudal System

The foundations of a prosperous economy in the Tweed Valley were laid down in the 12th century.

Firstly as Earl of Tweeddale and later as King of Scotland, David I created the conditions for this prosperity by establishing Norman-style baronies, firmly controlled from Norman-style castles, around which grew thriving towns such as Hawick, Selkirk, Roxburgh and Berwick.

The baronies were granted *in* return for military service in the form of payment of a certain number of **Knights' Fees**.

At first the baron was required to furnish actual knights and their retinues – i.e. men in armour on horseback. Later this system was replaced by payments in cash with which the feudal lord could buy the services of the necessary fighting men.

The **baron in capite** could divide up his lands among sub-tenants, a practice called **sub-infeudation.** Once the feudal obligation was transferred from military service to payment in cash, the baron in capite could make a profit from this subdivision of his land. For example, in 1220, The Barony of Wooler was held of the King by Robert de Muschamp for 4 knights' fees, but the baron in turn received payments from his feudal sub-tenants amounting to some 7 knights' fees.

Development of the Tweed Valley Economy

The rich farmland on the Scottish side of the Tweed – the Merse – became the "breadbasket of Scotland" during the Middle Ages. Cattle were reared in large numbers too, creating a strong industry in hides and leather goods. But the major product of the growing Tweed Valley economy was wool.

The upland areas were prime sheep- rearing country and the estates of the monastic houses were in the forefront of wool production.

The Cistercian abbey at Melrose, in particular, flourished on the revenues from their extensive sheep-farms. It was estimated that Melrose was responsible for at least5% of Scotland's total wool production.

Other Border monasteries like Kelso and Jedburgh were also involved in supplying Europe's increasing demand for good quality wool.

The Tweed Valley economy was further driven by King David establishing Roxburgh as the first two royal burghs in Scotland. Other royal burghs were created later in the Borders at Jedburgh, Selkirk and Peebles.

As in Norman England, burghs were created to provide the incentive for economic expansion. The freeholder, or burgesses in the burghs were given a measure of self-rule and special rights such as the ability to hold regular markets and fairs. The burgesses were also relieved of many of the usual obligations to their feudal landlords in the form of labour in the lord's fields or other such services. These benefits attracted and encouraged entrepreneurs and stimulated business in the burghs. In return, the king gained profits to the Crown from rents, taxes, tolls, harbour dues and other duties levied on the growing economic activities. The burghs were regulated by the burgh laws, which were maintained by the burgesses themselves.

Roxburgh, at the confluence of the Tweed and the Teviot, stood at the key strategic position where both rivers could be forded. Roxburgh grew into a main centre for the raw wool trade in the Kingdom of Scotland. Nothing remains visible of the substantial town of Roxburgh today.

Merchants from the Continent, particularly from Flanders and northern Italy, set up homes and businesses in Roxburgh and in Berwick, which was Scotland's major sea-port.

They traded from merchant halls, rather like the factories the Europeans set up in India in the 18th century. In Berwick, the Flemish had their Red Hall and the Germans from Cologne had their White Hall. In Roxburgh, there was a Black Hall for the foreign merchants.

Cloth production was becoming established on an industrial scale in both Flanders and Italy, and those countries were desperate to find new sources of good quality wool to meet the demand. Wool from the Tweed Valley found a ready market in competition with English wool.

IMAGE – HANSEATIC COG

Exported to Flanders from the port of Berwick IN SHIPS LIKE THESE Hanseatic cogs, it was made into cloth in places like Ghent and Bruges, then imported back into Scotland through Berwick. Much of it found its way across the Border into England, threatening to undermine the staple of England's economy in the Middle Ages. This was to be just one of many causes of friction between the two kingdoms.

The Flemish influence was considerable and survives in the surname of Fleming and place names like Flemington and Redhill in Berwickshire.

The 13th century proved to be a Golden Age for the Tweed Valley. Roxburgh and Berwick grew to be the largest and most prosperous towns in Scotland. The cosmopolitan town of Berwick was known as the "Alexandria of the North". The taxes generated through the port were equivalent to a quarter of the revenues of all the ports in England together. In 1286, the revenues from the burgh of Berwick amounted to £2,190, compared with £8,800 for the whole of England.

Jedburgh, too, located on the old Roman north/south route of Dere Street, seems to have flourished as a centre for cross-Border trade.

Flourishing of Thinkers

This was also a time when learning flourished in the Tweed Valley. The great Border abbeys produced clerics who were the administrators, the accountants, the professional secretaries and business agents who were essential to the operation of Scotland's government and economy.

The region also produced several great philosophers.

IMAGE - SIR MICHAEL SCOTT THE WIZARD

Sir Michael Scott was born in the Tweed Valley in about 1175. He spent much of his academic working life at the University of Toledo and at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor at Palermo. Scott was one of the foremost translators of the works of Aristotle into Latin from the Arabic manuscripts in which they had been preserved by Moslem scholars. He also explored alchemy and astrology, for which he was known as "the Wizard". It was said that he left Palermo before his death in 1234 and returned to his native Borderland to be buried with his books of spells in the precinct of the abbey of Melrose.

IMAGE – DUNS SCOTUS

The Franciscan scholar John of Duns, known as "Duns Scotus", was born about 1266. He studied at Oxford and Paris and became one of the ablest debaters of his day. His argument against the ideas of Thomas Aquinas made him many enemies amongst his intellectual contemporaries. After his death in 1308, his followers acquired the derogatory nickname of "dunces".

End of a Golden Age

This 13th century Golden Age came to an abrupt end.

On the eve of 19th March 1286, Thomas Learmount of Ercildoune (modern Earlston) was dining with the Earl of Dunbar. Thomas was known for his ability to foretell the future and he uttered these doom-laden words:

"Alas for tomorrow, a day of calamity and misery! Before the twelfth hour shall be heard a blast so vehement as shall exceed those of every former period – a blast that shall strike the nation with amazement – shall humble what is proud, and what is fierce shall level with the ground! The sorest wind and tempest that was ever heard in Scotland."

That very night, King Alexander III had fallen from his horse over a cliff at Kinghorn in Fife, in the midst of a terrible storm. He left no male heir and the struggle for the crown that followed was indeed to create a storm that brought calamity and misery to Scotland and an end to the Golden Age of the Tweed Valley.

Wars of Independence

The only surviving heir to King Alexander III was a granddaughter named Margaret, known as "the Maid of Norway". Six guardians were appointed by the Committee of the Realm of Scotland to run the country until she came of age.

In 1290, at the age of 7, Margaret was brought from Norway for her coronation in Scotland. The Scottish and English barons met at Birgham, near Coldstream, to arrange a marriage between Margaret and Edward, the heir of Edward I of England. However, Margaret died in Orkney, leaving thirteen contenders for the Crown of Scotland.

Recognising the feudal superiority of Edward I, based on the homages done by earlier Kings of Scotland, the Bishop of St Andrews appealed to him to decide the matter that had become known as "the Great Case".

Contenders for the Crown of Scotland

The first phase of the contest took place at Norham Castle in May 1291, where the serious players were reduced to three – John de Baliol, Robert de Brus and John Hastings.

IMAGES – SHIELDS OF THE THREE CONTENDERS

The final round was held in Berwick Castle in 1292, where King Edward chose John Baliol, the great, great grandson of King David I.

Two years later, Baliol was called upon to lead an army of Scottish knight to support his feudal overlord King Edward in his war against France. Baliol dithered and in 1295 a dozen Scottish barons took control and secured an alliance with France – "The Auld Alliance" as it is still known today.

In the summer of 1296, King Edward I marched northwards to besiege and capture Berwick, beginning more than three centuries of almost constant warfare between the two kingdoms.

In the early stages, the conflict was almost a civil war, as Anglo-Norman barons with estates and loyalties on both sides of the Border struggled to decide which of their feudal sovereigns they would support with their military service.

For example, Robert de Ros, who held the Barony of Wark on Tweed, threw in his lot with the Scots, for the love of a Scottish lady it was said. His uncle, William de Ros, informed Edward I Robert was declared a traitor and his estates in England were forfeited to the Crown and were passed on to his loyal uncle. Robert de Ros died in exile, apparently spurned by his lady. In 1317, after years of fighting had almost bankrupted the family, the Ros's swapped the Barony of Wark for an estate in the Welch Marches.

John Baliol was captured and ignominiously stripped of the regalia of a king of Scotland. Edward set up his seat of governance at Berwick and set about gaining pledges of fealty from the defeated Scottish lords who were made to fix their seals to the document that became known as the "Ragman Rolls".

In 1296, William Wallace won a stunning victory against the English at Stirling Bridge and was hailed as the sole guardian of Scotland at his base in the heart of the Ettrick Forest. This was the beginning of what the Scots call "the Wars of Independence".

Bannockburn

After several years of war with England, the devious politics of Scotland produced another great national hero - Robert the Brus, grandson of the claimant to the throne of Scotland in 1292.

At first, Brus had supported Edward I against John Baliol, but in 1287 he switched sides to join William Wallace.

In 1306, Brus seized the throne of Scotland and was crowned at Scone by the Countess of Buchan.

In June 1314, Edward II gathered a 20,000 strong English army at Berwick, and marched northwards to relieve the siege of Stirling. But at Bannockburn, he was defeated by Brus's 7,000 men.

Following the Battle of Bannockburn, the English were driven out of Scotland and southern Scotland enjoyed a dozen years of relative peace. The Scots were able to maraud at will throughout Northumberland and Durham.

They blackmailed towns to pay a "contribution" or suffer pillaging and burning. For example, in 1315, the Prior of Durham gave a contribution of £45 5s 3d to Robert the Bruce and William be Prendergast.

The ineffectual rule of Edward II and the chaotic conditions in the north led to a number of English barons in the region rebelling, and even siding at times with the Scots. Their leader was Gilbert de Middleton, who became a bogey man used by Northumbrian mothers to frighten their children into being good. Among his followers in our area were the Haggerston family.

King Edward became so desperate that he was forced to pardon Middleton in return for his help against the Scots.

The devastation in the region in this period is shown in the accounts kept for the Prior of Holy Island and the Parish of Norham.

For the year 1313 the Proctor of Norham's Rolls show revenue of £313. For the five years from 1316 to 1320 the Proctor's accounts show a total of only £71.

Famine and Disease

During the 14th century, the people of the region not only suffered almost constant warfare but also a succession of natural disasters. Between 1100 and 1300A, western Europe had enjoyed optimum weather conditions. The climate was on average about two degrees higher than today. However, conditions deteriorated from 1300 until the early 1800s, a period known as the "Little Ice Age". Between 1315 and 1322 the atrocious weather conditions resulted in a succession of failed harvests and widespread famine.

To make matters worse, there were recurring outbreaks of animal disease known as "murrain", which affected both cattle and sheep.

In 1317: **"There was a grievous famine and mortality at Newcastle, insomuch that the quick could not bury the dead, and a great corruption of cattle and grass. Some eat the flesh of their own children, and thieves in prison devoured those who were brought in, and greedily eat them half alive."**

In 1319 it was recorded that all the oxen being led to the siege of Berwick Castle died suddenly.

The miserable conditions in northern England were relieved a little when Edward II was deposed then murdered in 1326. The Treaty of Edinburgh, signed in 1328 by King Robert the Bruce and the new English King Edward III, brought a brief period of peace to the borderlands.

The Great Siege of Berwick

Robert the Bruce died later in 1328 and was succeeded by his son David II. In 1332, Edward Baliol, son of the deposed John Baliol, seized the throne of Scotland with the support of a group of barons who had also been disinherited during the War of Independence,

The following year, King Edward III arrived with a strong English army to besiege Berwick in support of Edward Baliol.

The Battle of Halidon Hill turned the tables back in favour of the English. As a result of the Scots defeat, Berwick surrendered to Edward III. In 1338, the town lost its status as a Scottish royal burgh.

An Engligh garrison occupied Roxburgh Castle almost continuously from 1334 until 1460.

PLAN OF ROXBURGH C. 1250

Roxburgh's trade was ruined by the war and by the end of the 15th century, the once prosperous town had almost completely disappeared. It's functional as a regional market town was taken over by Kelso, but the Tweed Valley never regained its position as an internationally important commercial centre.

The return to warfare brought further devastation to the region.

The Records of the Parish of Norham for 1334 show: **"the tithe corn of Tweedmouth, Ord and Allerdean destroyed by the Scots. Of the land of the smith of Shoreswood nothing, because he has been murdered by the Scots."** And in 1339 the Holy Island Rolls record **"Scremerston and Barmoor laid waste and Tweedmouth burnt by the Scots".**

In 1349 an even more terrible disaster hit the region with the arrival of the "Black Death", which the Scots borderers called the "English pestilence".

The Priory of Durham Rent Roll for 1347 lists 28 villages with a total of 718 tenants. The 1349 list records the deaths of 356 tenants in the same 28 villages - 51% mortality.

Warfare between England and Scotland continued intermittently for the next 150 years, complicated at times by civil wars in each of the kingdoms.

END OF PART ONE

The Development of Fortifications in the Borderlands

MAP - CASTLES AND TOWERS IN NORTHUMBERLAND, c. 1415

IMAGE – MOTTE AND BAILEY CASTLE

IMAGE – WARK CASTLE   c. 1120
Built by Sir Walter Espec (later in the hands of the Ros family)

PLAN - ETAL CASTLE   c. 1341   Sir Robert Manners
PHOTO – ETAL CASTLE

PLAN – NORHAM CASTLE ... Built 1121 by Bishop Ranulph Flambard with later additions
PHOTO – NORHAM CASTLE
PHOTO – NORHAM CASTLE 16th century gun embrasures

IMAGE – SMAILHOLM TOWER   c. 1500
PHOTO – SMAILHOLM TOWER

PLAN – DROCHIL CASTLE, WEST LINTON   c. 1575

IMAGE – DROCHIL CASTLE RUINS

PLANS – GREENKNOWE TOWER   1581   James Seton
IMAGE – GREENKNOWE TOWER   1581
PHOTO - GREENKNOWE TOWER   General View
PHOTO - GREENKNOWE TOWER ... Entrance defences
PHOTO - GREENKNOWE .. Loopholes for handguns

PLAN – BERWICK'S MEDIEVAL & 16th CENTURY WALLS
PLAN – ANGLES OF FIRE FROM BASTIONS
COLOUR MAP – BERWICK-UPON-TWEED   c. 1570

Flodden

The seeds of peace were sown at last in 1502, when an agreement was signed between Henry VII of England and James IV of Scotland. It was ambitiously named "The Treaty of Perpetual Peace".

In the following year the Treaty was sealed when Henry VII's daughter Margaret Tudor arrived at Berwick on her way to marry James IV. The meeting took place at Lamberton Kirk. On the Border just to the north of the town.

The Tweed Valley enjoyed a period of peace until 1512, when Henry VII joined the Holy League against the French King Louis XII. Louis appealed to his Scottish ally, King James, to invade northern England as a diversion. The result was the dreadful disaster of Flodden Field and the death of the Scottish king.

The one year old son of James IV was now King of Scotland and there followed a long period of regency during which Scotland still held loyalties to the French cause against the English.

The Tweed Valley suffered several English incursions during the 1520s.

When the Scots menaced the north of England again in 1523, Henry VIII dispatched an expedition that "left neither house, fortress, village, tree, cattle, corn or other succour for man".

James V – Clearing the Borders

Cross-Border raiding continued until, in 1530, when he was just 17 years old, King James V decided to please his English uncle Henry VIII by clearing the Scottish Borders of troublemakers.

The King led a force of 10,000 men into the Borders. From the Yarrow to the Cheviots and Liddesdale, dozens of men were taken prisoner or executed on the King's orders.

Three of the most notorious victims of the purge were Jonnie Armstrong of Gilnockie, Adam Scott of Tushielaw, known as "the king of thieves" and William Cockburn of Henderlands.

One of the saddest Border ballads, "The Lament of the Border Widow" is said to commemorate Cockburn's death.

The "Rough Wooing"

Even more terrible events took place in the 1540s.

In November 1542 another Scots invasion ended in a terrible defeat at the Battle of Solway Moss. Within a few days, King James V died, of a broken heart it was said. He lived long enough to hear the news that his queen had given birth to a daughter, Mary.

Henry VIII was determined that the newborn princess Mary should marry his son Edward, who was 5 years old at the time. However, the ruling factions in Scotland rejected this proposal and planned to have Mary married to the Dauphin of France instead.

Henry was enraged and decided to convince the Scots with a show of overwhelming force. He ordered a succession of invasions across the Border.

The campaigns began in 1543 and continued for the next six years. They became known as the "Rough Wooing".

First of all, the English officials did what they could to stir up old vendettas to create chaos and dissent in the Scottish Borders. Through bribes and encouragement, the Armstrongs were turned against the Kerrs and Scotts, Dixons, Trotters and Redpaths enlisted against the Homes.

In 1544, the Earl of Hertford was given instructions by Henry VIII that the Scottish Borders were to be **"tormented and occupied as much as they could be".**

He landed at Leith with 10,000 troops and sacked Edinburgh. Meanwhile, another English army under Sir Ralph Eure was burning its way into the Tweed Valley.

Eure's campaign continued into 1545 but, returning from the destruction of Kelso, Eure was ambushed on Ancrum Moor, on the road to Jedburgh. Deserted by his Scots Border allies, Eure died fighting.

One of the heroes of the battle of Ancrum Moor was a warrior maid called Lilliard.

PHOTO – LILLIARD'S STONE, ANCRUM MOOR

A stone erected on the battlefield is inscribed with this verse:

"Fair maiden Lilliard
lies under this stane
little was her stature
but muckle was her fame
upon the English loons
she laid monie thumps
and when her legs were cuttit off
she fought upon her stumps."

The Scots had success on that day, but within a few months the English were back, this time under the Earl of Hertford himself, who reported that his soldiers **"burned and raised and cast down seven monasteries 16 towers and five large towns, 243 villages, 13 mills and three hospitals".**

Everyone of any substantial standing, on either side of the Tweed, had to look to his own defence.

MAP – TOWERS IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS IN THE 16th CENTURY

Although there would be no more large-scale English invasions across the Border, the region remained in a lawless state for another six decades before peace finally came with the Union of the Crowns in 1603.

This chaotic period was the heyday of the Border reivers, about whom we shall hear more next week.